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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7880
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHHH/OPEC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 000366

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA FOR DAS GGRAY
DEPT OF ENERGY PASS TO A/S KKOLEVAR, A/S KHARBERT, AND
MWILLIAMSON
S/CT FOR GFEIERSTEIN AND BAVERILL
DS/ATA FOR KMALOY
DS/IP/NEA
TREASURY PASS TO A/S CLOWERY
DHS PASS TO TWARRICK AND DGRANT
CIA PASS TO TCOYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2018
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [KCIP](#) [PTER](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: SANG CONTINUES TO PROTECT OIL FACILITIES;
TRANSITION TO MOI UNCLEAR

REF: 07 RIYADH 2467

Classified By: Consul General John Kincannon for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On February 25, 2008, the Consul General, Political Counselor, RSO, and PolOff met with Prince Mishari bin Saud bin Abdul Aziz, commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) for the Eastern Province (EP), to discuss, inter alia, SANG efforts to protect critical energy infrastructure in the EP. When asked about a February 3 article in the Saudi Gazette newspaper that claimed 5,000 National Guard soldiers are currently protecting oil facilities and foreign consulates in the Eastern Province, Prince Mishari said that this number is not accurate. The SANG Commander explained that the Saudi Gazette reporter had stated there are 7,000 Ministry of Interior (MOI) Facilities Protection Administration (FPA) recruits already trained. The reporter then asked the Prince how many SANG soldiers work in security protection, to which Mishari replied 5,000. The Prince admitted this was not a researched number and has little meaning. (NOTE: Previous Post reporting indicates that as of the end of 2007, the MOI Facilities Security Force, or FSF, had recruited 10,000 members (Reftel A). It is unclear whether the newspaper's report of 7,000 trained is accurate. END NOTE).

¶2. (C) Prince Mishari confirmed that all interagency energy security functions in the EP are coordinated at the Command and Operations Room at the Emirate, a 24-hour command center staffed by members of the MOI, SANG, and Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA), and under the direction of Prince Mohammad bin Fahd, Governor of the EP.

¶3. (C) Prince Mishari added that the current role of the SANG is not in the organization's best interest, as he would prefer to have his men training rather than stationed in front of residential compounds checking identification cards. According to Major Kenric Bourne of the Office of the Program Manager-Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program (OPM-SANG), at any given time, approximately 75 percent of the SANG's manpower in the EP is being used for facility protection at residential compounds, energy

installations and the U.S. Consulate. The other 25 percent is occupied by administrative processes and other activities such as weapons re-qualification and leave, leaving little time for military training. While the Prince was clear that the SANG is will stand down on protection of oil facilities, he said that the SANG will continue to protect the Consulate General compound in Dhahran.

14. (C) COMMENT: Though Prince Mishari confirmed that the SANG would take a secondary role in energy facility protection as soon as the FSF is functioning, he seemed to have little idea as to what progress had been made in such efforts. Just as he had seemingly guessed the number of 5,000 SANG members protecting energy installations, the leader of the EP SANG appeared unfamiliar with any timeline for the transition from the status quo to an MOI FSF-led energy security force. This lack of knowledge seems consistent with previous SAG efforts on energy security matters, regularly hindered by the stovepiping of information between government security organizations. While MOI has the lead role in mounting up and training a new FSF force, communication and coordination difficulties with SANG forces currently carrying out these duties continue. As a result, the SANG appears to be uncertain when it will be asked to stand down from the role of facilities protection. END COMMENT.

(APPROVED: KINCANNON)
FRAKER